



What is Lateral Epicondylitis?

Nearly 3% of people in the U.S. have lateral epicondylitis every year.

1. Introduction

Lateral epicondylitis, commonly called tennis elbow, is an injury that causes pain and inflammation in the elbow. This injury is caused by repetitive motions that cause extra stress to the tendons connecting the forearm muscles to the elbow. Symptoms of tennis elbow include pain on the outside of the elbow, stiffness, swelling, and weakened grip.

2. Causes

Though this injury is called tennis elbow, it can be caused by any job, sport or activity that uses repeated arm or wrist movements. Some include:

- + Playing racket sports (backhand hits or with poor form)
- + Using plumbing tools
- + Painting
- + Driving screws
- + Cutting tough foods for cooking
- + Using a computer mouse for extended periods

3. Diagnosis

Physical exams are usually used to determine if a patient has tennis elbow. In some cases, other tests may be run to determine the extent of the injury.

- + **X-rays** may be used to check if other conditions, like arthritis, are also present.
- + **An MRI** may be used to check for damage to tendons and the patient's spine for possible disk problems causing arm pain.
- + **An EMG** may be used to check for any nerve problems causing pain.

4. Treatments

The first treatments include rest and ice packs, which help with recovery and reduce pain. Physical therapy exercises targeting the injured area, anti-inflammatory medications, or compression bandages are also used to help with recovery.

If these treatments don't work, more treatments can be used to resolve the injury, such as bracing the area, steroid or platelet-rich plasma injections, shock wave therapy, or even surgery.

Did you know?

Though commonly called tennis elbow, around 90% of those diagnosed with this injury don't develop it from racket sports.

For more information on lateral epicondylitis and supportive resources, please visit clevelandclinic.org/lateral-epicondylitis.

References:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/7049-tennis-elbow-lateral-epicondylitis>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tennis-elbow/symptoms-causes/syc-20351987>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/lateral-epicondylitis-tennis-elbow>